

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9006

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION UN

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 5199

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM NO UR

SUBJ: ATOM-FREE ZONES AND KEKKONEN PLAN

SUMMARY. DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS VIBE CONFIRMED LAST WEEK AND AGAIN ON NOVEMBER 25 THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO SOFTENING IN NORWEGIAN OPPOSITION TO KEKKONEN PLAN. NORWEGIANS ARE INDEED PUZZLED AND IRRITATED BY THE UPSURGE IN FINNISH ATTENTION TO THE PLAN, DESPITE THE FACT NORWEGIANS HAD MADE THEIR NEGATIVE VIEWS KNOWN TO THE FINNS. WHILE SOVIETS MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO EXPLOIT NEGOTIATIONS ON DELIMITATION OF BARENTS SEA CONTINENTAL SHELF TO EXTRACT SOME FORM OF CONCESSION FROM NORWEGIANS INVOLVING SOVIET SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE AREA, THERE HAVE BEEN NO EFFORT MADE THUS FAR BY SOVIETS TO LINK NEGOTIATIONS TO KEKKONEN PLAN (AS REPORTED IN HELSINKI'S 2383). FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND'S SCHEDULED VISIT TO HELSINKI AROUND DECEMBER 16 WILL PROVIDE FURTHER OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS PROPOSAL WITH THE FINNS. END SUMMARY.

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1. DURING NOVEMBER 21 DISCUSSION WITH DCM, DIRECTOR GENERAL

VIBE EXPRESSED CONCERN AND IRRITATION OVER RESOLUTION ON ATOM-FREE ZONES WHICH FINLAND HAD JUST INTRODUCED IN UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY. HE EXPLAINED THAT NORWEGIANS HAD MADE VERY CLEAR TO FINNS, FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY SOVIET PRESIDENT PODGORNYY IN HELSINKI LAST OCTOBER SUPPORTING KEKKONEN PLAN, THAT THEY HAD NOT RPT NOT CHANGED THEIR NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PLAN (SEE OSLO'S 4186). VIBE RECALLED THAT PRIME MINISTER BRATTELI HAD ALSO MADE NORWAY'S NEGATIVE VIEWS KNOWN WHEN HE VISITED USSR LAST MARCH AND MORE RECENTLY POLAND AND HUNGARY. NORWEGIAN POSITION, VIBE REITERATED, IS THAT NORTHERN EUROPE IS PRESENTLY AN ATOM-FREE ZONE; NORWAY DOES NOT WANT TO CAST DOUBT ON THE VALIDITY OF PAST NORWEGIAN STATEMENTS OPPOSING THE STATIONING OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON ITS SOIL; AND IT INSISTS THAT ANY SUCH SCHEME WOULD NEED TO INVOLVE THE GREAT POWERS AND CENTRAL EUROPE. VIBE ASSUMED THAT THE FINNS HAVE IGNORED NORWAY'S OBJECTIONS AND MOVED DISCUSSION OF ATOM-FREE ZONES IN THE UNGA BECAUSE THEY ARE UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE USSR.

2. VIBE NOTED THAT THE SWEDES ARE ALSO OPPOSED TO THE PLAN, AND HE BELIEVED THEY TOO HAD PRINTED LETTER ON THE SUBJECT IN THE FINNISH PRESS (OSLO 4186). SINCE THE SWEDES FEEL THEY CANNOT REFUSE TO DISCUSS THE PLAN WITH THE SOVIETS, IT IS POSSIBLE VIBE SAID, THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO MAY VISIT SWEDEN. SO FAR AS A POSSIBLE GROMYKO VISIT TO NORWAY IS CONCERNED, SOVIET MFA DIVISION CHIEF FOR NORTHERN EUROPE ZEEMSKOV TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND IN MOSCOW LAST SEPTEMBER, WHEN FORMIN WAS EN ROUTE TO TOKYO, THAT GROMYKO WAS EXTREMELY BUSY AND VISIT COULD NOT BE ARRANGED UNTIL NEXT YEAR. (COMMENT: SHOULD GROMYKO VISIT SWEDEN, IT STILL SEEMS PROBABLE HE WOULD ALSO VISIT NORWAY GIVEN THE LONG-STANDING NORWEGIAN INVITATION.)

3. IF FINNS GAVE NORWEGIANS SOME ASSURANCE THEY WOULD NOT PRESS KEKKONEN PLAN (AS REPORTED HELSINKI'S 2383), THIS WOULD HELP EXPLAIN VIBE'S IRRITATION AND PUZZLEMENT. GENERALIZED QUESTION WHETHER SOVIETS HAD EVER LINKED KEKKONEN PLAN TO UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS ON DELIMITING BARENTS SEA SHELF (AS REPORTED ALSO HELSINKI) BROUGHT CATEGORIC DENIAL FROM VIBE ON NOVEMBER 25. THE ONLY OCCASION HE COULD RECALL

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WHEN TWO SUBJECTS WERE LINKED WAS IN NOVEMBER 22 HELSINGEN SANOMAT ARTICLE WHICH CRITICIZED FINNISH GOVERNMENT FOR PRESSING KEKKONEN PLAN AT TIME WHEN NORWAY WAS ENTERING VERY SENSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS, EXPRESSING SYMPATHY WITH NORWAY'S IRRITATION.

4. TO PROTECT HELSINKI SOURCE, DCM ASKED WHETHER THERE WERE ANY NORDIC COUNCIL OR OTHER MEETINGS COMING UP WHICH WOULD GIVE NORWEGIANS AND SWEDES OPPORTUNITY TO PROBE FINNISH

INTENTIONS. IN REPLY, VIBE VOLUNTEERED INFORMATION THAT FRYDENLUND WOULD INDEED BE VISITING HELSINKI, PROBABLY AROUND DECEMBER 16, AS ANOTHER STEP IN SERIES OF BILATERAL TALKS HE HAS BEEN HOLDING WITH HIS NORDIC COUNTERPARTS. THIS WILL GIVE FRYDENLUND AN OPPORTUNITY TO PERHAPS OBTAIN SOME CLUE FROM FINNS RE FUTURE SOVIET TACTICS AS THEY RELATE TO KEKKONEN PLAN. VIBE'S AND THIS EMBASSY'S SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT MAY UNDERLIE PRESENT ATTENTION TO THE PLAN ARE TREATED IN SEPTTEL.

5. IN THE MEANTIME, VIBE SAID THAT NORWAY WOULD MAKE A SMALL GESTURE TOWARD THE KEKKONEN PLAN BY VOTING FOR THE FINNISH UNGA RESOLUTION TO DISCUSS ATOM-FREE ZONES IN THE COMMITTEE ON CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT (CCD). (COMMENT: HE MAY SEE PROLONGED DISCUSSION IN THE CCD AS ONE WAY TO BURY THE PLAN GRACEFULLY.) VIBE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT MOST WESTERN COUNTRIES WOULD VOTE FOR THE FINNISH RESOLUTION. (EMBASSY WAS NOT IN ANY POSITION TO COMMENT.)

6. ACTION REQUESTED: IN VIEW OF THE GREAT INTEREST IN NORWAY IN THE ISSUE OF ATOM-FREE ZONES, AND SPECIFICALLY KEKKONEN PLAN, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE BEING PUT ON DISTRIBUTION FOR ANY RELEVANT DISCUSSIONS IN THE UNGA, CCD OR E/W FORUMS. IT WOULD ALSO APPRECIATE RECEIVING ANY BACKGROUND STUDIES ON THE ISSUE PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
BYRNE

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